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DOG PLATOONS

1. FACTS

The First Scout and Sentry dog platoons arrived in the Republic of Vietnam on about 1 March 1966. They were followed by the Second Sentry dog platoon in September 1966, and the Second Scout dog platoon in October 1966. After an initial acclimatization period, both type dogs were made available for deployment.

A. Scout Dog Platoon - Scout dogs have been deployed in the following capacities:

- (1) Combat Patrols - Usually used as the point of the patrol, if the wind is favorable, to detect enemy personnel, equipment and tunnels.
- (2) Ambush Patrols - Used for security on the way to the ambush site. At the ambush site they give early warning of enemy approach.
- (3) Search and Clear Operations - After a village is secured, the dogs search for tunnels, spider holes, and equipment such as rifles, clothing, and radio gear. The dog alerts on an area where someone is hiding or has recently been hiding by detecting the smell of human scent in the area.
- (4) Intimidating VCS during questioning - The Vietnamese people are afraid of these big dogs and they have been used successfully in intimidating Viet Cong Suspects into answering questions.
- (5) Listening Posts - The dogs give early warning of any activity in the area.

B. Sentry Dog Platoon - Sentry Dogs are deployed in the following capacities

- (1) Providing security for aircraft.
  - a. At MAG-12, MAG-13, and MAG-36 sentry dog teams are securing dangerous avenues of approach.
  - b. At Base Defense in DaNang, dog teams are guarding a dangerous avenue of approach to MAG-11's aircraft parking lot.
- (2) Providing Sentry Duty for HAWK Missile Sites.
  - a. At "A" Battery, 2d LAAM Battalion, Dog teams are providing perimeter security.
- (3) General Sentry Duty
  - a. At the new Marine PX, Sentry Dog teams are used to stop pilferage.
  - b. At the Commanding General's Quarters, Sentry Dogs are guarding a dangerous avenue of approach from the sea and the beach.

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PERSONNEL 67

DOG PLATOON 2/73

2-PLATE

2 PLATOONS

73 - PERSONNEL.

2. DISCUSSION:

A. Scout Dog Platoon

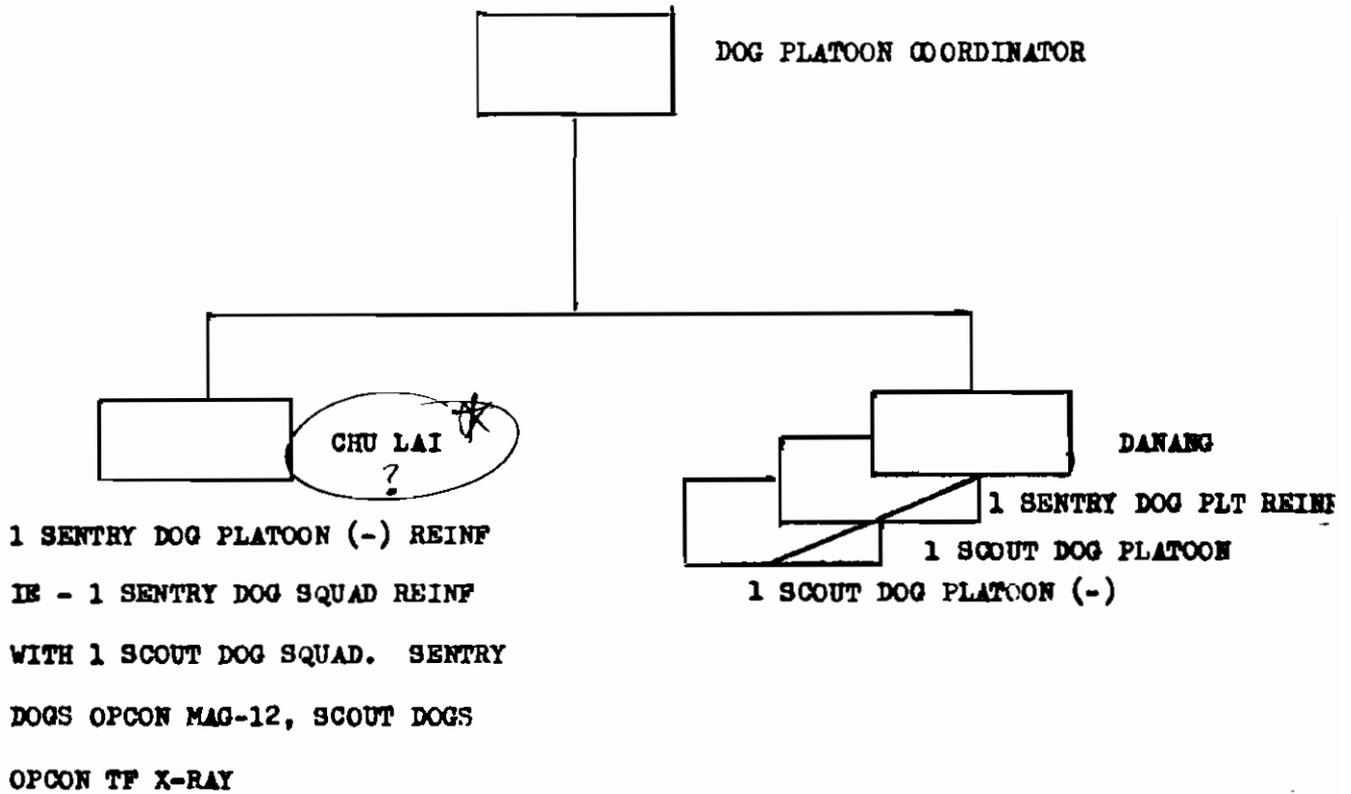
- (1) Combat Patrols - Once the dog given the alert, the handler interprets the alert as to direction and distance and relates this information to the patrol leader. The job of the scout dog is then finished and the dog is provided with security while the patrol leader takes appropriate action in dealing with the enemy.
- (2) Ambush Patrol - The dog alerts on any activity and the handler gives the patrol leader the direction and distance of the activity. This is somewhat like a listening post once the ambush site is reached and the dogs will get tired after several hours of sitting with no activity. This problem is remedied by sending two dogs on the patrol. The first one will work while the other one rests and the dogs can rotate every two hours or so.
- (3) Search and clear operations - A scout dog should not be used on the initial entry into a village via "sweep" type operations. The dog is distracted by any activity and therefore all activity should be held to a minimum. After a village is secured all the people should be removed or rounded up at one end of the village (the downwind end) and then the scout dog can conduct a systematic search for people hiding in tunnels, and other equipment in the area.
- (4) Intimidating VCS - The Scout Dog does not attack the VCS but sits there and growls. Usually this is sufficient.
- (5) Listening Posts - The dog alerts on any activity in the area but he will tire after about two hours. Therefore two dogs are used and rotated, one work, one rest, every two hours.

B. Sentry Dog Platoon

- (1) Sentry Dog teams are used very similarly to a normal sentry on post. Detection of intruders is increased due to the dog's keen sense of smell and hearing. One major difference between the sentry dog post and the normal post is that a sentry dog post should be isolated with traffic in and around controlled so that the dog will not be continually alerting.
- (2) When the dog alerts his handler to the presence of intruders trying to penetrate his post, the handler determines how many there are. Depending on the number of intruders, the handler will either release his dog or request assistance.

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*Working @ Chu Lai during the time*

*\* I talked to a Sgt. Handler who said this was bull*